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A5C7 WAKE OF

2nd MARINES

Capt. Robert K. Crist

Donated by

MSgt Roger M. EMMONS

## **PRIZE CONTEST**

**NEEDED:** A coat of arms or insignia for the Second Marines. It should be based on facts in this historical sketch. A suitable prize will go to the officer or man who designs it. A board of officers will be the judges.

You don't have to be an artist; you don't have to draw anything. You may express your idea in descriptive words . . . and let somebody else do the drafting. Start after this prize now. Every member of this command is eligible. This contest closes March 30, 1941.

NOTE

This sketch of the  
2nd Marine Regiment was  
distributed to the com-  
mand at Camp Elliott,  
San Diego, California,  
in the Spring of 1941.

*Roger M. Emmons*  
Roger M. Emmons

Erstwhile 1stSgt of "B"  
Company, 2nd Marine  
Regiment.

Marine Corps Museum  
Quantico, Virginia

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**In the  
Wake  
of the  
Second  
Marines**

(By Captain Robert K. Crist, USMCR)





## IN THE WAKE OF THE SECOND MARINES

(By Captain Robert K. Crist, USMCR)

*Once Moros dropped tons of stones upon them; stones in baskets from the lava cliffs of Samar. Once they starved along the banks of the Sohoton; starved because "mission" came before food. Then they plunged into Panama, Cuba, the Philippines. They were the bulwark of peace in the land of the Manchus. They revived "The City of the Dead," Vera Cruz. They went into Haiti and on to Santo Domingo. They were—and are—the Second Marines!*

History tells us this very Base was founded by a former commander of the Second Marines!

It was Major General Joseph H. Pendelton, retired, now living in Coronado. Back in the yesteryears of 1911-12 he headed the Second Regiment, for the first time a permanent unit. However, the Second Marines is really older than that. It dates back into another century because, in the days of the Philippine Insurrection, in the year 1898,

the provisional brigade that shipped to Cavite included the Second Marines.

True, the Second Marines had but two battalions then; however, they made history for their corps. When they found that the Moros had devoted three years to concocting a prepared defense in the unscalable lava cliffs of Samar, they scaled the "unscalable" without fear. The enemy, fortified with tons of rocks in suspended baskets, dropped them to flee to security—only to find more Second Marines.

On the way back to civilization food didn't run short; it ran out! The Second Marines tightened the family belt and didn't eat for days. Such is the heritage of the Second Marines. It has been written in blood in Marine Corps history that the Second Marines "can take it"!

Colorful as it is, that history is not a boast, it's a challenge; a challenge offered in the sacred, living memory of Leathernecks who did things for these United States.

When the Marines went to Panama in 1904 there was, aboard, a hard-hitting lot of campaigners known as the Second Regiment. They went to Cuba, too, in 1906. There three years, they stood for law, order,

and the continuing virtues of peace. In China likewise, they harboured these ideals when the Manchu Dynasty laid away its brocades and silks under the pressure of a new republic.

Thirty years ago, when the provisional brigade formed at Philadelphia under Col. L. W. T. Waller for duty at Guantanamo, Cuba, it included the Second Regiment. It consisted of 31 officers and 685 enlisted. Today the regiment has 60 officers with 1800 enlisted.

There were no permanent regiments in the Marine Corps until 1911 but the "Second" was in the field and functioning more than a decade before that date.

In January, 1914, the Second Marines participated with the Advance Base Brigade, the old name for Fleet Marine Force, in a series of successful maneuvers. It shipped on the USS *Prairie* for the isle of Culebra and helped repel the whole Atlantic Fleet in a problem which brought naval commendation. The Marines simply did their job—with the customary thoroughness. Then they went to Pensacola, Florida to recoup.

They didn't stay long, however; the Mexican situation tightened. Down they went

to Vera Cruz, called commonly "the City of the Dead" because it was infested with fever.

Mexicans, in those days, were sniping from windows, church towers, and atop the roofs of houses. The Marines didn't like it! It was the Second Marines who called all bets along Calle de Montesinos. That's why the date, April 22, 1914, will live long in the memory of this command.

On that day the Second Regiment, with the Third Regiment in support, was ordered to "take over" in fact; it moved through the town, entered every house, checked every male person, collected all arms and made their possessors prisoners. The Second Marines suffered casualties that day but its mission was satisfactorily accomplished. The outfit worked under continuous fire but failed to take it seriously. It did, though, meet real trouble when it went to Haiti a year later. So fast did it embark for its work that the Navy commended it in an official letter:

"The Navy department is gratified to note the promptness of the execution of its order directing that a regiment of 500 Marines embark on board the USS Connecticut for duty at Port au Prince. The department appreciates the excellent management and

team work that made it possible for a force of this size to get away fully equipped in less than 24 hours . . .”

The Second Marines stayed in Haiti and the Dominican Republic for exactly 19 years!

It was in Sept. 1915, that the American forces first occupied the custom house at Port au Prince and placed the city under martial law. The territory adjacent to the town came next because of the cacos, bandits.

The Second Marines took their share of a tough job and were lauded for successive victories. History records that they worked without fear and were constantly whipping trouble. The dramatic background of this Regiment, itself, was always the compelling influence!

It's true that World War I slowed up bandit activity, but in 1919, it came booming across the military horizon once more. A half-dozen engagements with cacos occurred each month. The Second Marines kept their Springfields oiled and went from action into more action.

On July 1, 1925, when the Eighth Marines were disbanded, its five companies were committed to strengthen the Second

Marines. In those days, however, the work was passive. The Marines were busy making an old land new in Haiti.

As they emphasized peace, new roads began to appear where once there had been but bandit trails. The Haitian constabulary was bolstered. Harmony was encouraged where harmony could be taught. Such became the mission of the Marines.

During its later years of occupation the Second Regiment, with its designation changed officially in 1932 to the Second Marines, did little save garrison duty. The natives sensed, however, that the fighting spirit still lived. It had from the beginning. It is the way of the Second Marines!

So successful was the work that, by July, 1934, the second battalion at Port au Prince had been reduced to two companies while the first battalion at Cape Haitien had but one company left. Then, on Aug. 15, 1934, the Second Marines disbanded upon evacuation of the First Brigade from Haiti. For the convenience of the government the men went to other outfits but there was always the Second Marines, and there will always be a Second Marines!

Major General William P. Upshur, then

a captain astride a horse, was a member of the Second Marines. Four hundred enemy "cacos" fired upon his patrol one night while crossing a river in a Haitian ravine. In a three-way flanking action he came through . . . with his share of the Second Marines. They were his troops. Now he's commanding general of this post.

Our Division Commander, Major General C. B. Vogel, then a lieutenant back in the years of 1909 to 1912 served upon three different occasions with the Second Marines—in Panama during the riots and in Cuba during the sugar plantation strikes.

As a recognition for a long and useful service to the American people, the Second Marines have been bestowed the following Marine Corps Standards and Streamers.

*Philippine Insurrection with 0 stars*

Philippine Campaign—Feb. 4, 1899 to July 4, 1902.

*Expeditionary with 6 stars*

Cuban Pacification—Sept. 12, 1906 to April 1, 1909.

Cuban Expedition—May 28 to Aug. 5, 1912.

Mexican Service—Apr. 21 to 23, 1914.

Haitian Campaign—July 9 to Dec. 6,  
1915.

Haitian Campaign—Apr. 1, 1919 to  
June 15, 1920.

Haitian Expedition—Dec. 7, 1915, to  
Aug. 5, 1931.

This means that our Regimental Colors  
will be decorated accordingly.

On February 1, 1941, the Second Marines  
reformed as a unit, under Col. Joseph C.  
Fegan, one of the three infantry regiments  
in the Second Marine Division. There's  
more work to do, said Uncle Sam to the  
"can take it" Second Marines.

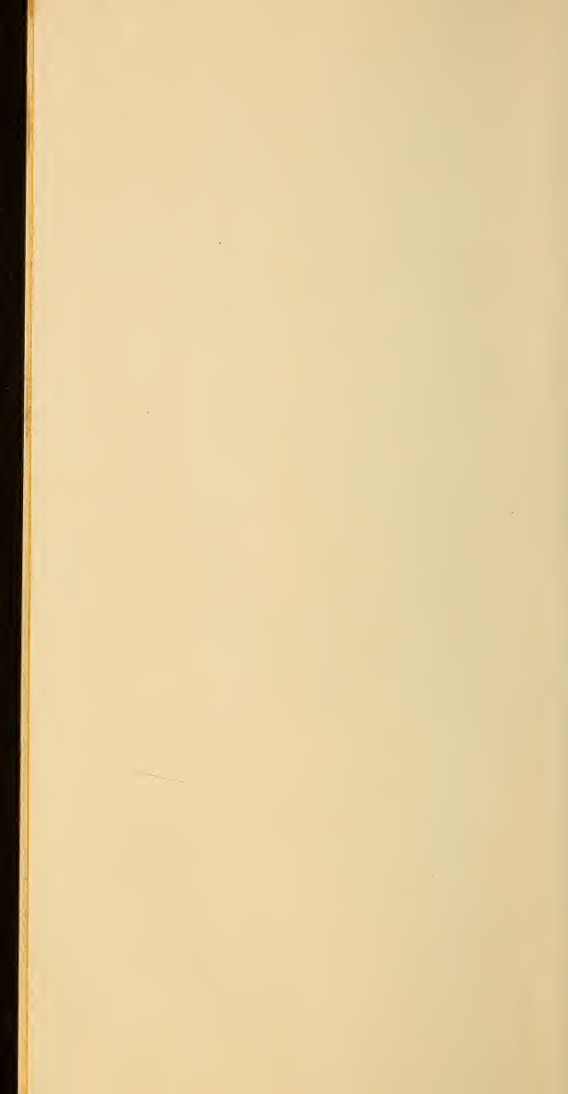




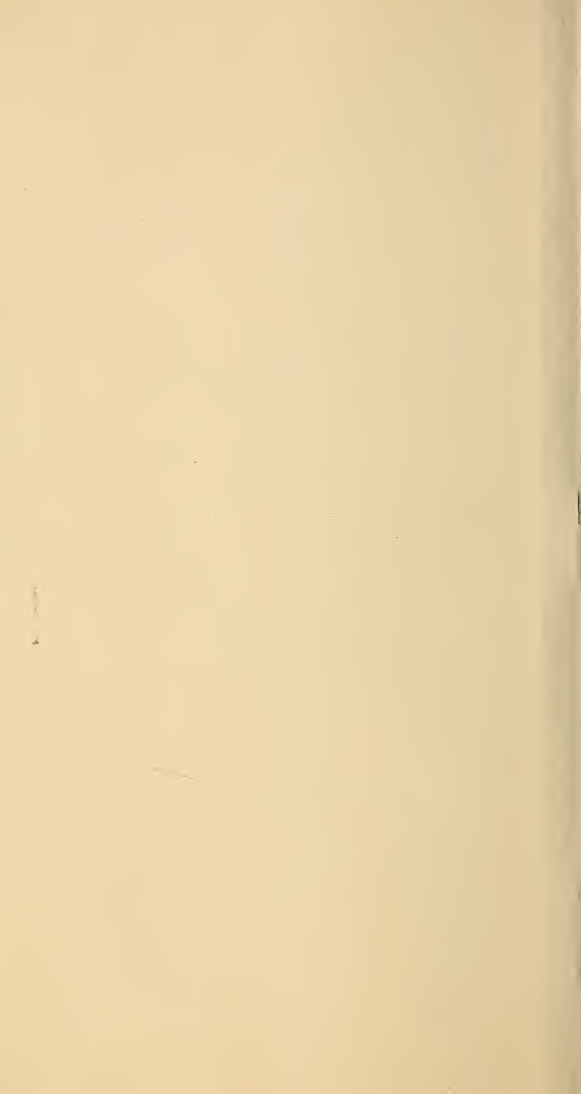
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